Berlin. The Symphony Continues

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The Symphony Continues

Orchestrating Architectural, Social, and Artistic Change in Germany's New Capital

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Acknowledgements

Our collaborative work began in 1997 and with each project our now longstanding personal and professional relationships have evolved further. As Germanists interested primarily in the literature and culture of divided and once again united Germany, it is only logical that we turn our attention to the city of Berlin, which has undergone fascinating changes in the years since unification.

Like our previous anthology, this has been a collaborative project from the very beginning, as each editor (when time permitted) took over portions of the work. In general, we editors are grateful to all of the contributors for their cooperation and ability to comply with deadlines, and to the Walter de Gruyter Verlag, especially Heiko Hartmann, Susanne Rade and Katja Hermann, with whom we worked closely on this project. Specifically, we appreciate the support we received from our institutions, colleagues, friends, and family members, who have stood by us during this entire process.

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Introduction

CAROL ANNE COSTABILE-HEMING AND RACHEL J. HALVERSON

Berlin's Symphony Continues: Architectural, Social and Artistic Change

The fall of the Berlin Wall is one of the defining images of the late twentieth century. The subsequent unification of Germany and the decision to return Berlin to its status as capital has made the constant changes within the city a matter of even greater public interest. It also has afforded Berlin the opportunity to create a new image for itself, one that can serve as a counterbalance to the city's politically charged recent history as the capital of Nazi Germany and former East Berlin as the capital of the German Democratic Republic. Poised between capitalist Western Europe and the former communist powers in Eastern Europe, Berlin occupies a fascinating geopolitical space. As Karl Scheffler wrote as early as 1910, Berlin is a city destined "immerfort zu werden and niemals zu sein" (267).[1]

Even now at the outset of the 21st century, Berlin is in a state of relentless transformation, still portrayed in the media not as a city that is, but as city that is always "becoming." Many changes, above all architectural ones, are obvious; others are occurring much more subtly, as the population shifts to occupy areas of the city that long lay fallow. In incorporating these changes, the city thus seeks to redefine itself, and in so doing, also attempts to shake off some of the historical burdens that befell it during the 20th century. For observers of these changes, the city evokes the feel of an unfinished site; new political directions and city planners continue the tasks that previous ones have left unfinished. As our book's title suggests, our reference points derive from the images of Walter Ruttmann's 1927 film, *Berlin. Die Sinfonie einer Großstadt* (*Berlin. Symphony of a Great City*). The release of that film earned Ruttmann immediate fame, thrusting him into the limelight and making him one of the most important avant-garde filmmakers of the 1920s. The film itself is symbolic for Berlin as it is remembered from the Weimar period, a robust and dynamic city, full of speed. When viewed today, the film also calls to mind the historical period before the turmoil and strife that characterized Berlin for most of the 20th century. Seventy-five years after the debut of

1 "forever to become and never to be." Unless otherwise noted, the authors have done all translations.

Ruttmann's film, the metaphor of the symphony remains contemporary: on 10 April 2002 the documentary filmmaker Thomas Schadt's homage to Ruttmann, *Berlin: Sinfonie einer Großstadt* (*Berlin. Symphony of a City*) premiered at the Berliner *Staatsoper*, with live symphonic accompaniment.[2] Our anthology builds on the idea of a city symphony that these two filmmakers espouse, and thus seeks to analyze the myriad changes in the city as part of an unfinished composition. As the capital of newly united Germany, Berlin has been granted the unique opportunity to re-create itself: it yearns to become a multi-national metropolis, a *Weltstadt* ("world city"), with an image and stature equivalent to that of other European capitals such as Paris and London. Still the scars of the past lie just under the city's new glossy surface and continue to color its realization of a new identity.

This volume is the first in any language to examine and analyze the myriad changes in the city of Berlin since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. The media, particularly news magazines such as *Der Spiegel*, eagerly have documented the changes in Berlin and followed every controversy. Recently, documentary films have tackled changing Berlin. The city also has garnered considerable attention from historians and writers in the last five years. It is our hope that this collection of essays will be read alongside such texts as Brian Ladd's *The Ghosts of Berlin* (1997), Giles MacDonogh's *Berlin* (1997), Alexandra Ritchie's *Faust's Metropolis* (1998), Michael Wise's *Capital Dilemma* (1998), David Clay Large's *Berlin* (2000), and Elizabeth A. Strom's *Building the New Berlin* (2001). Bringing together scholars from the United States, Brazil, Germany and Australia, who represent German studies in general with their individual disciplinary interests in literary and film studies, urban planning, art history, architecture, music, history and anthropology, this anthology seeks to present readers interested in recent German history and culture a unique glimpse into the various constituencies that make up Berlin and that impact the city's challenges and promises. Physical space, its representation and the way we experience it form the backbone of all the essays in this volume.

The first section, physical space, presents five essays that focus not only on the outward changes occurring in Berlin, but also on the history, mentality, and philosophy behind them. In his photo-essay, "*Gedächtnis* and *Zukunft*: Remembrance and the Future," Gary Catchen demonstrates how Berlin's future is dependant on remembering its past. Catchen views Berlin's current architectural renewal as symbolic of the continuous connection between Berlin's history, its present, and its future. The photographs provide a pictorial tour of important Berlin sites: traditional tourist destinations (*Reichstagsgebäude*, *Gedächtniskirche*); contrasts between the Topography of Terror exhibit and the Jewish Museum; the Cultural Forum in West Berlin

2 In choosing to title his film "Symphony of a City," Schadt implies a more general approach, making Berlin symbolic of major metropolises rather than being the symbol par excellance.

(*Neue Nationalgalerie*)[3] and the traditional, historic city center (*Lustgarten*), sites of intense debate (*Neue Wache*, *Schloßplatz*) and industry (AEG buildings).

Barbara Mennel's essay, "Shifting Margins and Contested Centers: Changing Cinematic Visions of (West) Berlin," examines a topographic shift in cinematic portrayals of Berlin. She addresses a geographic axis of center (*Potsdamer Platz*) and margin (*Kreuzberg*) to highlight spatial relationships. Pre-1989 films such as Helke Sanders' *Redupers* (1977) and Wim Wenders' *Himmel über Berlin* (*Wings of Desire*, 1987) are representative of films, Mennel argues, that employed (West) Berlin topography to underscore the decenteredness or marginality of West German identity in the post war era. Post-1989 cinema shifts its focus to the construction on *Potsdamer Platz*, where a paradigm shift occurs: the earlier margin now serves as center in two films by minority directors, Hito Steyerl's *Die leere Mitte* (*The Empty Center*, 1998) and Hussi Kutlucan's *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* (*Me Boss, You Sneakers*, 1998). *Die leere Mitte* focuses on the question of public space and who may access it. Mennel shows that this film beseeches the audience to understand and to question the continuities and discontinuities of violence and power as they relate to the marginalization of groups. *Ich Chef, du Turnschuh* is an immigration comedy that focuses on the situation of migrant workers and asylum seekers. Both films thus seek to insert a minority perspective (typically a voice from the margin) into the transnational center that *Potsdamer Platz* has become.

In "Building on a Metaphor: Democracy, Transparency and the Berlin *Reichstag*," Eric Jarosinski scrutinizes the concept of *Transparenz* ("transparency"). The current architectural trend toward glass façades draws on a tradition begun in government buildings in Bonn. The transparency of the glass is intended to symbolize an openness that the democracy of the Berlin Republic promises. Drawing on the theoretical writings of Walter Benjamin (*Einbahnstraße*) and Theodor Adorno (*Minima Moralia*), Jarosinski applies their cultural criticisms to the metaphorical transparency occurring in Berlin. He warns, that despite the lofty ambitions of political policymakers, transferring an aesthetic concept like that of transparency onto Germany's political agenda may serve to work against the democratic ideals it seeks to evoke.

In contrast to Jarosinski's focus on the *Reichstag* cupola as a metaphor for openness and democracy, Simon Ward turns to the site of Berlin's new central railroad station for his analysis of how rail travel impacts physical space. In "'Neues, altes Tor zur Welt': The New Central Station in the New Berlin," he

3 The entire complex of the Cultural Forum includes three museums: *Neue Nationalgalerie, Gemäldegalerie,* and the *Kunstgewerbemuseum.* Also part of the Cultural Forum are the philharmonic, the *Staatsbibliothek,* and the *Staatliche Institut für Musikforschung* which also contains the *Musikinstrumentenmuseum.* In the photograph in the chapter in question, however, only the *Neue Nationalgalerie* is pictured.

outlines the fundamental importance of the railroad station for late 19th and early 20th century Germany, and thus sees a continuity between this earlier era and the plans for rail travel in unified Germany. The new central station, which occupies the site of the former *Lehrter Bahnhof* has been designed by Meinhard von Gerkan as a space for lived experience. The railroad station is intended to reflect cultural change and following Jarosinski's line of analysis, the emphasis on transparency in the 21st century shifts to consumption, rather than openness.

Rail travel also is the focus of Karein Goertz and Mick Kennedy's contribution. Whereas Ward analyzes the new train station and its potential as a site not only for connecting Berlin to other cities but also as a site for consumerism, Goertz and Kennedy trace history and traditions via the Berlin *S-Bahn*. According to their essay, "Tracking Berlin: Along *S-Bahn Linie* 5," this particular city rail line provides a unique perspective from which to view the city due to its encircling route. The circularity overrides the traditional geo-political distinctions of East and West that have become so ubiquitous in discussions of Berlin. Though the *S-Bahn* is a public entity, travel along the rail line affords, as Goertz and Kennedy argue, a glimpse into private spaces and unofficial (non-tourist, non-promotional) views. They propose that chronotopography, the layering of literal and spatial descriptions of the physical urban space, makes it possible to experience *S-Bahn* travel. They offer a new type of methodology for mapping the city that draws not only on physical markers, but also on sensory and cognitive inputs.

In the second group of essays, all of the authors examine the way the city can be experienced, in film and literature, in controversies surrounding music, in the constant naming and re-naming, and in the perceptions of former East and former West Berliners. Evelyn Preuss analyzes two films that she characterizes as city symphonies. In her "The Collapse of Time: German History and Identity in Hubertus Siegert's *Berlin Babylon* (2001) and Thomas Schadt's *Berlin: Sinfonie einer Großstadt* (2002)," Preuss proposes that the pre-occupation with 1920s Berlin projected in these films grows out of a desire to return to an era free of historical guilt. Though both films focus on 21st century Berlin, Preuss's analysis demonstrates that the preoccupation of both directors with Weimar images prohibits their engagement with Germany's difficult history in the ensuing years. The conflation of past and present ignores historical accuracy, resulting, in Preuss' view, in time collapsing.

It is the 40-year division and resultant creation of divergent intellectual communities that is the focus of Elizabeth Janik's essay, "The Symphony of a Capital City: Controversies of Reunification in the Berlin Music Community." She traces the history of various cultural controversies in Berlin since unification, focusing in particular on the debate surrounding the merger of the two *Akademien der Künste* (Academies of Arts) and the continued support for Berlin's three public opera houses. Considerable protest accompanied the efforts to merge the two *Akademien der Künste*, for members of the East

German academy had to pass a selection process and receive state and party approval. Ultimately, the discussions focused on the relationship between art and the State. Public support for cultural institutions forms the backbone of the debate surrounding the potential merger of Berlin's opera houses or the eventual closing of at least one. In this instance, cultural finances take a backseat to the attempt to define German music and its appropriate representation. Despite all overt attempts to unify the cultural and intellectual communities in Berlin, the centuries-old debates about appropriateness still remain.

Through a series of interviews with East and West Berliners, Jens Schneider seeks to analyze how they perceive themselves and each other. His essay, "Mutual Othering: East and West Berliners Happily Divided?" addresses the questions of identity and perception: how do East and West Berliners perceive themselves and each other. Schneider's conclusion is disturbing. Contrary to Willy Brandt's claim that the fall of the Wall would allow what belongs together actually to be together, it seems that Peter Schneider's narrator in *Der Mauerspringer* (*The Wall Jumper*, 1982) was correct: there is still a divide between East and West, if only in the heads of Berliners.

Following on the question of identity, Margit Sinka provides a fascinating look at the innate human predisposition to labeling. She traces sociologist Heinz Bude's branding of the "Generation Berlin" as the defining construct for the Berlin Republic. Drawing on business models rather than artistic or political ones, Bude classifies the Generation Berlin as "entrepreneurial individuals." Ultimately, these individuals will want to enter the political arena, evoking decided change. Bude's original optimism from 1998, however, has already waned, for somehow Berlin is unable to sustain the newness and promise that Bude envisioned. Nonetheless, Sinka concludes, Bude successfully has inserted himself and his Generation Berlin into discourses about Berlin.

In her essay, "Living Berlin: Autobiography and the City," Rachel J. Halverson directs attention to several generations of male East German novelists, who following the *Wende*, turned to autobiographical writings in their efforts to come to terms with the tumultuous political, social and economic upheaval taking place. By examining three writers from three different generations, Günter de Bruyn, Christoph Hein and Stephan Krawczyk, Halverson articulates the position that the city of Berlin plays in each life story. Furthermore, as her analysis progresses, multiple subtextual meanings of the city emerge, each of which conflicts with the officially sanctioned portrayals of East and West Berlin that GDR authorities allowed. This analysis demonstrates that the autobiographical works of East German authors offer the plethora of perspectives necessary to understand that complexities of what Berlin was and is becoming.

Moving from the experiences of the city, to its representation, the final section of the anthology presents five essays that treat literary and filmic portrayals of Berlin. In his essay on Peter Schneider, "Divided and Reunited Berlin in Peter Schneider's Fiction," Stephen Brockmann examines three of Schneider's narratives that take the city of Berlin and the German Question, that is the co-existence of two divergent political and social existence in immediate proximity to each other, as their focal point. While *Der Mauerspringer* (1982) pre-dates the Wende and unification of Germany, an understanding of this text plays a pivotal role in Brockmann's judgment of Schneider's later works. Brockmann sees the Berlin of *Der Mauerspringer* as the "most German of German cities" because it is in this divided Berlin that the question of German unity most glaringly is obvious. Brockmann views Schneider's approach here as an open one, and concludes that this openness is missing from Schneider's subsequent Berlin novels. *Paarungen* (*Couplings*, 1992) in particular focuses exclusively on the love interests of the three male protagonists, ignoring fully the larger political questions that divided Berlin symbolizes. When in *Eduards Heimkehr* (*Eduard's Homecoming,* 1999), the narrator returns to a united Berlin, political questions once again take a backseat to personal concerns. Though sexual prowess remains an issue for Eduard, his ability to satisfy both his Jewish wife and his East German lover, places him in the role of an "unconflicted" [West] German, whose sins of the past have been forgiven. Though the German Question has been resolved, at least politically, Brockmann concludes that Schneider's inattention to it in these two post-unification novels represents a literary sellout.

In the last decade, Berlin has changed so rapidly and radically, that it is difficult to absorb the changes except in a schematic framework. Through an analysis of short fictional representations of the city, Carol Anne Costabile-Heming's essay charts the impact that the physical, social, and cultural changes have had on writers who are both native Berliner and relative newcomers. In "Berlin Snapshots: Images of the City in Short Fiction," she begins with an analysis of Katje Lange-Müller's anthology *Bahnhof Berlin* (1997), a collection that explores the principle of transit, the city as a vehicle as well as the city in transition. *Die Stadt nach der Mauer* (1998) assembles prose pieces of less-established writers, who look to the city's potential for the future by moving beyond the images of Berlin as a divided city. Romanian-born Carmen-Francesca Banciu's presents a collection of vignettes in *Berlin ist mein Paris* (2002). The compilation illustrates how an immigrant can come to feel at home in the vast and foreign Berlin. The texts discussed move beyond black and white comparisons and the juxtaposition of East and West to show that Berlin is a vibrant, multifaceted city. Costabile-Heming concludes that only such short fiction can provide readers with the true variety of impressions that are indicative of Berlin.

Mila Ganeva turns to cinematic representations of Germany's capital in her essay "No History, Just Stories: Revisiting Tradition in Berlin Films of the

1990s." She argues that post-Wall Berlin films no longer contain the political pathos and historical depictions characteristic of the genre prior to 1989. Ganeva first addresses the commodification of unified Berlin, whose urban spaces have been cleaned up in an effort to promote tourism. In these efforts at beautification, significant historical reference points (the most obvious example being the Berlin Wall) have all but disappeared. The history that is permitted to remain does so in an easily digestible form. One of the most significant trends in Berlin film from the 1990s is the shift in perspective from West to East or at least to the old city center. Despite this topographical shift, Ganeva contends that Berlin films of the 1990s do not concern themselves with questions of unification, but present instead, the stories of individuals in the present. Wolfgang Becker's 1997 film *Das Leben ist eine Baustelle* (*Life is all you get*) and Andreas Kleinert's *Wege in die Nacht* (*Paths in the Night*, 1999) for example, avoid direct confrontation with historical issues. As Ganeva argues, these films evoke the traditions of earlier Berlin films through their emphasis on aesthetic forms and themes.

Kristie Foell also looks away from political-historical perspectives to analyze four post-unification love stories in "Growing Together, Growing Apart: Berlin Love Stories as Allegories of German Unification." In her analysis, Foell employs the metaphor of love story to symbolize the unification process still taking place in Germany. As the locus of unification, Berlin provides the appropriate backdrop to judge the success of these love stories. Foell analyzes two commercial pulp novels and two more challenging ones in her attempt to read the unification process as love story. The sado-masochistic characters in Else Buschheuer's *Ruf! Mich! An!* (*Call! Me! Up!* 2000) is, according to Foell, a critical commentary on the sex, glitz and consumerism of the West that now too finds a home on the *Potsdamer Platz*. Barbara Sichtermann's *Vicky Victory* (1995) is a similar example of the personal degradation that occurs through Westernization, the main characteristic of the unification process. Foell juxtaposes these two works with two novels from 1996, Monika Maron's *Animal Triste* and Ingo Schramm's *Fichters Blau* (*Fichter's Blue*). Unlike other critics who have focused on the erotic side of Maron's novel, Foell concludes the novel actually bemoans the unfulfilled promises of unification. Schramm, on the other hand, turns to Germanic traditions, citing both Grimm's fairy tales and Wagnerian operas to suggest the ambiguousness of post-unification unions through the siblings, Janni and Karl. Foell concludes that all of the characters in these novels suffer from an inability to achieve a sense of unity; symbolic of the way that Berlin's unity still is, at least emotionally, incomplete.

In the volume's final essay, Sunka Simon returns to the bond that exists between Weimar Berlin and the newly emerging Berlin of the 21st century. In "Weimar Project(ions) in Post-Unification Cinema" she focuses on the ways that Weimar-era iconography has infiltrated post-1989 Berlin films. It is noteworthy that the popularity of Weimar images grows out of that era's

association as the "better" Germany; that is, one free of the historical guilt of post-Nazi Germany (arriving at a reference point similar to that of Evelyn Preuss). Simon bases her analysis on two very different films: *Comedian Harmonists* (1997) and *Nachtgestalten* (*Night Shapes*, 1999). The blockbuster *Comedian Harmonists* idolizes both the musical group that is its subject as well as the Berlin of the Weimar era. Simon argues that the filmmaker Josef Vilsmaier tends to gloss over the complicated issues of racial politics so clearly a part of the Harmonists' career trajectory, leaving the audience with a "feel good" sensation. By contrast, Andreas Dresen's documentary-like *Nachtgestalten*, while focusing primarily on the darker side of Berlin existence, draws on the montage techniques of Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, thus bringing the volume full circle.

Constant changes make it difficult to analyze the city of Berlin adequately, and the adage "Berlin wird" ("Berlin becomes") is as apt today as it was during Scheffler's time. It perhaps is more productive to view Berlin from a distance, for as Bodo Morshäuser writes, "Um [...] doch lieben zu können, muß ich stets Berlin verlassen [...]" (37).[4] It is our hope as the editors of this volume, that we and our contributors can bring exactly that perspective to Berlin, for, though all of us have spent extensive time in the city, we all also write about the city from afar. It is with this distanced eye and differentiated perspective, drawing from our own Berlin experiences and cultural relevancies that we present this anthology in the hopes that all who read it will gain a sense of Berlin since 1989, enough to want to visit and investigate personally this unfinished, perhaps never to be finished symphony.

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4 "In order to love Berlin, I constantly have to leave it."

Physical Space

GARY L. CATCHEN
The Pennsylvania State University

Gedächtnis and *Zukunft*, Remembrance and the Future: A Photo-Essay[1]

Berlin is "becoming" the new political and cultural capital of the *Bundesrepublik*. New architecture characterizes this transformation, because it reflects visions of the future. Moreover, this future is inexorably linked to a tumultuous past. Likewise, when the original architects built many important, older buildings, their designs reflected the corresponding *Zeitgeist*. Over the course of history, the architectural statements corresponding to these older buildings have evolved. Thus, the old and the new architecture provide a continuous connection between the past history, the present state, and the future of Berlin, reflecting simultaneously the history and the culture of Berlin. To understand how and in which directions Berlin is "becoming," we must examine the architecture, both old and new. For this purpose, I use the visual impact of still photography augmented with text.

In Figure 1, a cityscape of *Potsdamer Platz*, the crane is a ubiquitous element. The myriad of cranes, pointing in all directions, symbolize the construction of new architecture, the signpost for the new Berlin spanning from the immediate present well into its future. Moreover, the cranes presage the erection of skyscrapers. Historically we would not identify Berlin as a city consisting of many skyscrapers. Frankfurt am Main, "Mainhatten," holds that distinction. Because its architectural composition is diverse and eclectic, *Potsdamer Platz* represents an archetypical component of a city that is burgeoning with new buildings. In contradistinction to some of the government buildings, for example, the *Reichstag*, which have a history that is interwoven with the histories of the Second Reich, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, and the Federal Republic, the buildings on *Potsdamer Platz* will have a connection only to the history of the future. This situation is ironic, given that between the world wars, *Potsdamer Platz* was a key instrument in Walter Ruttmann's film, Berlin. *Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927) and during the

1 I thank Professor Daniel E. Willis of the Pennsylvania State University for his insightful and critical reading of the manuscript. I thank Mr. Aaron R. Catchen of Prestrud Architect in Jackson, Wyoming for critically reading the text and for providing many important and useful suggestions. I thank Ms. Margaret K. Barton of Bellefonte Area High School for assisting me with the graphical art.

Cold War, *Potsdamer Platz* was a no-man's-land, devoid of buildings and the focal point of the division of Berlin.

After unification, major international corporations, including Daimler Chrysler and Sony, began planning the new *Potsdamer Platz*, whose entrance Figure 2 depicts. Architects Renzo Piano and Christoph Kohlbecker developed the master plan for Daimler-City, and Helmut Jahn created the master plan for the Sony Center. The angular appearances and the structural and stylistic use of glass and bricks characterize the design of Piano's *Torhaus* ("gate building"), and these architectural elements decidedly depict the architecture of the future. In contrast, the imposing, monumental brick structure of the other gate building by Hans Kollhoff, resembles the architecture of the historicism period. These distinctively different styles allude to classical New York skyscrapers such as the Woolworth Building, the Fuller (Flat Iron) Building, and ironically the Chrysler Building, each of which is marked by different design elements typifying the tenor of their period of construction (Willis). Thus, as the classical skyscrapers of New York signified the transformation of that city into an international metropolis nearly a century ago, the new skyscrapers of Berlin symbolize the renaissance of a metropolis that prior to 1933, was a cultural and intellectual capital.

Between the two skyscrapers that form the entrance to Daimler-City, the *Alte Potsdamer Straße* runs into *Marlene-Dietrich-Platz*. The naming of this plaza has been controversial, for it only recently became acceptable politically to honor Dietrich's contributions to the performing arts. This long delay may reflect the Germans' increasing confidence in their *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (mastery of the past). *Marlene-Dietrich-Platz* evokes memories on three different levels: as a sex symbol of the German cinema of the 1920s and the early 1930s; as a diva of the American cinema and as an opposer of the Nazis and entertainer of) US troops during World War II. In addition to the buildings on *Marlene-Dietrich-Platz* that provide space for commerce (Figure 3), the *Musicaltheater* (Figure 4) provides a home for the performing arts.

In a water basin, in front of the *Musicaltheater*, stands a metallic, 14-meter-high sculpture, "Galileo im ökologischen See," which Mark Di Suvero created. The linear elements represent axes running through space. Where they cross, a ring-like structure holds them together. The intersection of the linear and circular elements suggests streets and walkways, essentially a sculptured depiction of *Potsdamer Platz*. Moreover, the water basin, into which this sculpture is integrated, provides a feeling of openness, even when dense crowds may occupy and fill the rest of *Marlene-Dietrich-Platz*.

Whereas the newness of *Potsdamer Platz* points to Berlin's bright future, numerous other sites in Berlin depict the city's checkered history, including its division, its legacy as the capital of the Third Reich, and East Berlin's legacy as the capital of the German Democratic Republic. From 13 August 1961 until New Year's Eve 1989, Berlin had remained a divided city. Since unification,

many symbols of the division have disappeared, including much of the Wall and most traces of where the Wall stood. Figure 5 depicts one of the few remnants of the Berlin Wall. The sculpture, *Berlin* (Figure 6), resembles the broken links of a massive chain, and, as such, it symbolizes the unification of Berlin. Interestingly, the artists, Brigitte und Martin Matschinsky-Denninghoff, created this sculpture in the mid-1980s. Thus, it preceded unification, and symbolized at that time the "becoming" of the New Berlin.

The terror institutions of the Nazi-era were located on the *Prinz-Albrecht-Gelände*, a tract of land located east of the *Martin-Gropius-Bau* (Rürup). These organizations included the *Geheime Staatspolizeiamt* (Gestapo or federal secret police) and various offices of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS or protection organization). Perhaps the most heinous of crimes perpetrated in these buildings was the planning of the *Wannsee-Konferenz*, during which the Nazi authorities developed the "final solution" to eradicate European Jewry. By the conclusion of World War II, these buildings had been destroyed. Only some parts of the basements remained, along with piles of rubble. In the mid-1980s, scholars excavated the ruins, and created an exhibit (Figure 7) that explains the structure and operation of the Nazi terror organizations. This exhibit represents a form of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, in which, in a candid and detailed fashion, historians describe the crimes committed by the Nazis.

The former *Reichsbank* (government bank), shown in Figure 8, is an example of Nazi-era architecture. Early in 1933, a competition was held to design a new building for the *Reichsbank*. The participants included two well-known architects, Walter Gropius, who fled from Nazi Germany to England in 1934, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, who emigrated to the US in 1938. Adolf Hitler selected the design of Heinrich Wolff, who proposed a steel-reinforced concrete structure that was covered by stone walls. The construction was completed in 1938 (Borgeit and Jost).

The participation of Gropius and Mies van der Rohe in this competition is ironic, because the Nazis basically drove their well-established school of architecture, *Hochschule für Bau und Gestaltung* (College for Construction and Design), commonly known as the Bauhaus, out of existence. Interestingly, these architects along with others, such as Le Corbusier and Erich Mendelsohn, had developed the International Style of Architecture that has influenced much of mid-20th-century architecture. The International Style and the architecture of the Nazi-era are antithetical. Whereas the former is characterized by simple, modern, and highly functional designs, the latter is distinguished by grossly exaggerated classical elements such as long, monolithic series of columns.

During the 1930s, the Nazis viewed Berlin with contempt. Correspondingly, as part of their megalomania, the Nazis planned to build a new capital, "Welthauptstadt Germania" (world capital Germania). For this purpose, Hitler commissioned the architect, Albert Speer, to lead the design of *Germania*. In his memoirs, Speer commented on the planning of *Germania*, in

which he quoted Hitler: "Zumindest in der Planung war Hitlers Satz verwirklicht, daß, 'Berlin sein Antlitz ändern müsse, um sich seiner großen neuen Mission anzupassen'" (Weihsmann 1166).[2] Although only a few of the designed buildings were ever constructed, these stated intentions remind us that the western world could have become a very different place, if the Nazis had been more successful. Although the existing buildings from the Nazi era, such as the former *Reichsbank*, are reminiscent of that period, these buildings serve very different needs today.

After the Nazi-era, the former *Reichsbank* housed the *Finanzministerium der DDR* (Treasury of the German Democratic Republic); and, after 1959, the Communist Party used the building. Despite the building's history, the professor of architecture, Hans Kollhoff, proposed that the building should be used for the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Ministry) in conjunction with a new building, shown in Figure 9. Kollhoff designed the modifications for the former *Reichsbank*, and Thomas Müller and Ivan Reimann designed the new building.

In addition to government architecture, Berlin has a rich tradition of industrial buildings. Peter Behrens designed many of these industrial buildings during the early 20th century. Perhaps best known are the factories of the AEG (*Allgemeinen Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft*), founded by Jewish industrialist Emil Rathenau in 1887. Figures 10 and 11 show parts of a factory complex. These architecturally innovative factories emphasize Berlin's industrial past, and are located in areas such as Wedding that typically do not attract tourists.

Berlin's traditional city center has undergone numerous changes, particularly with each successive government. In 1816, Friedrich Wilhelm III commissioned Karl Friedrich Schinkel to design a guardhouse for soldiers, *Neue Wache* (Figure 12). The simple lines and abstract cubic form reflected the limited resources available for this barrack. Schinkel used the architectural genre of the building itself to evoke an abstract idea about the past, namely, the hegemony and culture of ancient Greece. After 1918, the *Neue Wache* no longer served as a barrack. In the 20th and continuing into the 21st century, the *Neue Wache* has taken on a new function: to remind people about the victims of war and violence. In 1931-32, the architect, Heinrich Tessenow, redesigned the building as a memorial to soldiers killed in World War I. In 1960, when this central district was part of East Berlin, the Communists again redesigned the building to serve as a *Mahnmal für die Opfer des Faschismus und Militarismus* (Memorial to the Victims of Fascism and Militarism).

Following unification, the *Neue Wache* was renovated to evoke Tessenow's design. Since 1993, an enlarged copy of Käthe Kollwitz' statue, *Trauernde Mutter mit totem Sohn* (Grieving Mother with a Dead Son), shown

2 "At least in the planning Hitler's statement was realized: 'Berlin must change its face in order to adapt to its great, new mission.'" Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

in Figure 13, sits in the interior. In the early 20th century, Kollwitz dedicated the sculpture to "allen Opfern von Krieg und Gewalt" ("all victims of war and violence"). In the context of World War I, after the death of her son Peter in 1914 in Dixmuiden, Flanders, Kollwitz remarked that the sculpture should serve as a reminder of the sacrifice made by young volunteer soldiers.

This sculpture frequently is referred to as a "Pietà" and thus alludes to Michelangelo's sculpture showing an image of a dead Christ being held by his mother. The appellative may be an unfortunate accident, for the Expressionist Kollwitz emphasized antiwar themes and not Christian ones. In 1993, former chancellor Helmut Kohl declared the *Neue Wache* with Kollwitz' sculpture to be the *Zentrale Gedenkstätte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Central Memorial of the Federal Republic of Germany), an event that incited intense controversy, because many victims of war and tyranny have been non-Christians. Although Kollwitz' *Trauernde Mutter mit totem Sohn* offers no direct allusion to Christian beliefs or themes, the appellative, Pietà, does allude to a fundamental element of Christianity, namely, the crucifixion of Christ. Likewise, an observer could view Kollwitz' sculpture as symbolizing the crucifixion, regardless of her intent.

The Nazi atrocities decimated Berlin's Jewish population, and few remnants of Jewish history exist. Since its founding in 1962, the Berlin Museum has maintained a Jewish collection but, because of limited space, was unable to exhibit the collection adequately. In the 1980s, the city of Berlin decided to build a new museum, dedicated exclusively to the history of the Jews of Germany. The Polish-born American, Daniel Libeskind won first prize in an international competition to design the new Jewish museum (Figures 14, 15).

The Jewish Museum does not resemble a typical museum structure, in which the ground plan would have a rectangular cross section and the walls would have rectangular windows (Schnedier). Instead the ground plan consists of zigzag lines, and from above it resembles a lightning bolt. Rather than rectangular windows, one observes various notches and tears that run in slanted directions. Windows are set in the notches, which decorate the zinc-sheet-metal exterior walls, and symbolize events in the history of the Jews in Germany. This feature could indicate that the history of the Jews has no well-defined beginning and end.

This architectural style is known as deconstructivism (Johnson and Wigley). It is a style that can evoke a sense of inconsistency in the observer. That is, a particular architectural element, e.g., a distorted window, appears to be very different in character from a conventional element, e.g., a rectangular window. To the observer, this inconsistency suggests that something is not correct. We can describe this alienation as an architectural *Verfremdung* (alienation), analogous to the literary *Verfremdungseffekt* originated by Bertolt Brecht in his dramas.

Forty-nine upright stone slabs, *Stelen*, arranged in a seven-by-seven square array, form the *Garten des Exils und der Emigration* (Garden of Exile and Emigration). This arrangement is numerically significant: the number, forty-eight, alludes to the year in which the State of Israel was founded (1948) and the forty-ninth slab in the middle symbolizes Berlin. Olive branches, according to Jewish tradition symbols of peace and hope, grow in the soil inside of the slabs. Likewise, the slabs remind the observer of grave markers that have long been missing from destroyed Jewish cemeteries.[3] When observed from a distance, the grid of slabs appears to be slanting. If one walks around them, the posts are perpendicular, because the ground on which they stand is sloped.

Upon entering the *Holocaust-Turm* (Holocaust Tower), visitors confront a dark and empty tower with light entering from above. Although they can hear the noise from the street, the street is inaccessible, as if the visitors were confined to a concentration camp. This *Holocaust-Turm* provides a brief but existential experience, and a corresponding exhibit chronicles the Holocaust.

Some of Berlin's best-known landmarks are the *Reichstag* (Parliament) and the *Gedächniskirche* (Memorial Church). Paul Wallot designed the *Reichstagsgebäude* (Parliament Building), completed in 1894. Square, castle-like towers rise over the corners of this monumental rectangular construction, and a triangular gable, whose framework is supported by six round columns, forms the main entrance in the center of the building. In the original construction, the 75-meter-high central cupola made out of iron and glass and culminating in a lantern topped with a king's crown, was celebrated as an architectural masterpiece. It is ironic that such a powerful building was built for the parliament, because, at that time, the *Reichstag* had no real power. Although the *Reichstag* represented a democratic element of the monarchy of Wilhelm II, it was only allowed to approve tax laws. On 28 February 1933, arson partially destroyed the building's interior. During World War II, the building sustained heavy damage; and, subsequently, the cupola, symbolizing the power of the Prussian monarchy, was demolished. After unification, an international competition was held to obtain a new design for the *Reichstagsgebäude* (Figure 16), where the *Bundestag* (German Parliament) would subsequently meet. The British architect, Norman Foster, won the competition. Except for the cupola that Foster completely redesigned, the exterior, after it was sandblasted, looks as it did earlier. The cupola is made out of glass and is egg-shaped; a ramp winds around the inside of the cupola. This transparent glass cupola symbolizes the "open understanding of the state and the society" (Borgeit and Jost).

Between 1891 and 1895, the original *Gedächtniskirche* was built in a new-Romanesque style to honor the memory of Kaiser Wilhelm I. The original

3 The grid of Stelen also resembles the design of a Holocaust memorial in Berlin that the American architect, Peter Eisenman, submitted for the competition.

building, designed by the architect Franz Schwechter, was a symbol of the German Empire. During the next several decades, the church became a focal point for the Charlottenburg district, symbolizing unity and a feeling of community. During World War II, the church was heavily damaged but not completely destroyed. During the post war era, the rubble became a symbol of the bombings of World War II. In the late 1950s, the ruins were to be demolished, but residents protested this action. In 1961-63, the architect Egon Eiermann designed two modern style buildings next to the church: the high six-sided bell tower and the flat eight-sided main building. The old tower ruins were secured structurally, and serve today as a church museum and a remembrance hall for peace and reconciliation. Figure 17 shows the reinforced ruin and the new bell tower and church.

Because of its division, West Berlin was cut off from the cultural heart of the metropolis. This led to the construction of new cultural centers in the West that often duplicated those cultural institutions out of reach in East Berlin. As Figure 18 illustrates, the roof of the *Neue Nationalgalerie* (New National Galery), the largest self-supporting steel plate in the world, appears to float over the glass façade, formed by a steel framework. This 1.25-metric-ton roof was fabricated elsewhere, and, during construction, it was hoisted onto the supports. The "flat"roof has a slight curvature in the center and at the corners so that it does not appear to sag (Cobbers). The glass façade provides a transparent view to the exhibit space. Because of this absence of support structures, the interior can be said to allude to the Pantheon (Kleihues, Becker-Schwering and Kahlfeld). Although the function of this museum is to house art exhibits, its structural form is also an art exhibit. The building consists of two stories. The upper story, visible in the photograph, is integrated into the concrete court, where a diverse collection of modern sculptures surrounds the building. The lower story opens into a walled sculpture garden. This design by Mies van der Rohe presents a modern application of classical architectural elements. Instead of using massive, classical columns to support the roof, slender steel columns provide the support. These architectural allusions to classical design are reminiscent of Peter Behrens' approach to using classical elements to design the modern factories of the AEG, specifically the *Montagehalle* and the *Turbinenhalle*. In his design, Mies van der Rohe departs from functionalism to create a modern but classical gallery.

In the historic city center, tourists and residents today enjoy the *Lustgarten*, an open, grass-covered park, shown in Figure 19. From this vantage point, an observer can experience a historically and architecturally diverse view. To the north, stands the rebuilt version of Berlin's first museum, Schinkel's *Altes Museum*, showcasing the beauty of classical design. The Berliner Dom stands to the east. Its architecture shows the monumentality that characterizes the Historicism of the late 19th century. Across *Unter den Linden*,

stands the *Palast der Republik* (Palace of the Republic).[4] Built in 1973-76, it shows the banality characteristic of many buildings designed under Communist rule. This site was the location for Andreas Schlüter's Hohenzollern *Stadtschloß* (Royal Palace). Because of war damage, the Communists demolished the ruins of the early 18th century palace in 1950. Until the unification, the so-called parliament of the former GDR, the *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber), had its seat in the modern-but-characterless *Palast der Republik*. Shortly before unification, the *Palast* was closed because of asbestos contamination. Although renovations have been underway for several years, a variety of groups have proposed that the *Palast der Republik* should be demolished and that the *Stadtschloß* should be rebuilt on this site. This has resulted in public debates about architectural style. Should Berlin hold a design competition for a modern design or for a Baroque façade? On 4 July 2002, by a large majority, the voted to rebuild the Royal Palace according to the Baroque style of the original castle. Although architects such as Hans Kollhoff and Peter Conradi have discussed this issue, the proposal to build a Baroque-style building has prevailed.[5] Despite the apparent fait accompli, the government of Berlin has not yet identified the means required to construct this building.

Via photographs, we have toured important sites and buildings that represent Berlin's past and its "becoming." New buildings are architectural statements of a future, and we can interpret this "becoming" by reviewing the connections of the New Berlin with its tumultuous past.

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Figure 1: Cranes and construction on *Potsdamer Platz*, June 2002

Figure 2. Entrance to Daimler-City *am Potsdamer Platz*. On the left, stands the 80-meter-high *Torhaus* by Renzo Piano; and, on the right, stands the 101-meter-high *Torhaus* by Hans Kollhoff.

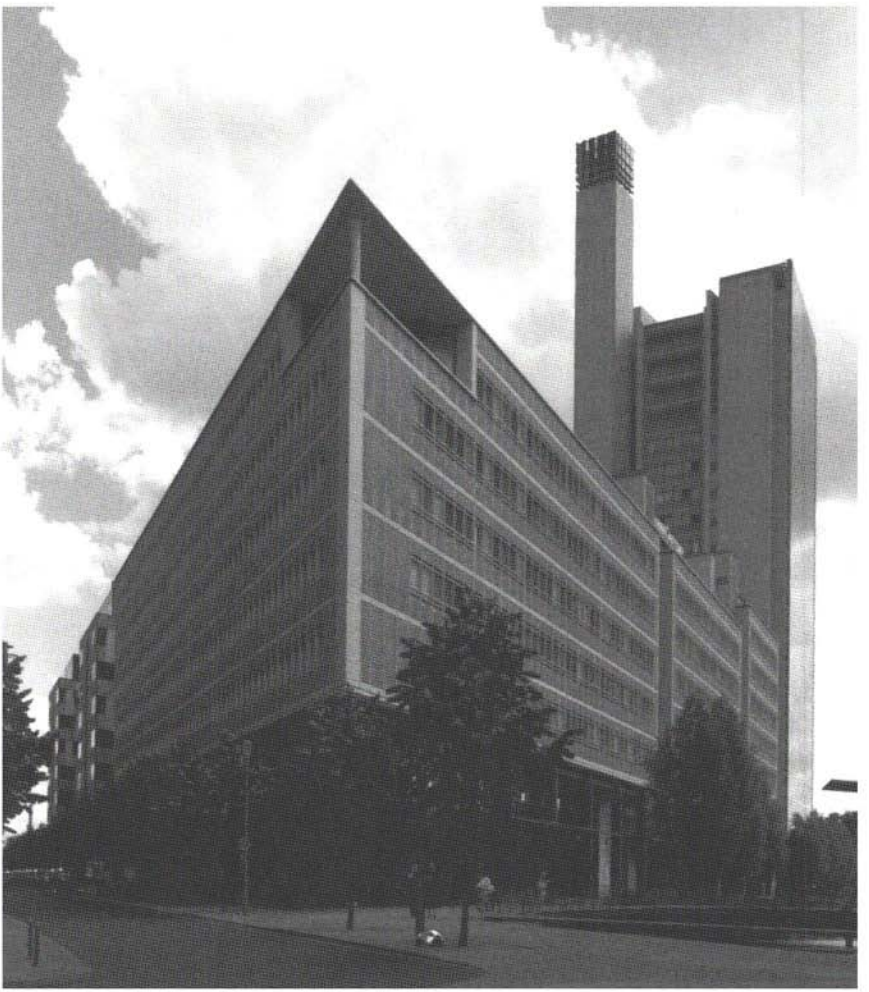

Figure 3. Designed by Renzo Piano and Christoph Kohlbecker, the 85-meter-high *Debis-Zentrale* (Daimler Chrysler Services AG Headquarters) stands on *Eichhornstraße*, which intersects *Marlene-Dietrich-Platz*. Behind the tower runs the *Landwehrkanal*, which the *Marshall-Brücke* crosses. This bridge carries the name of General of the Army George C. Marshall, former Chief of Staff and later Secretary of State. Along with President Harry S Truman, Marshall developed the Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany.